

Woody Cover Control – Fencelines/Woody Draws Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)
University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

For:	County:
Field(s):	Farm #:
Date:	Tract #:
Designed By:	Contact Information:

WOODY COVER CONTROL ALONG FENCELINES AND WOODY DRAWS WILL IMPROVE UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT

PURPOSE:

Most fence lines and woody draws in Missouri do not provide adequate cover for upland wildlife. The trees have become too large and have shaded out the weeds and small shrubs that quail and rabbits depend on. Additionally, most of these woody draws and fencelines have been invaded by sod-forming grasses like tall fescue and smooth brome. Woody cover control in these areas will provide instant escape cover for small game and promote annual weed and shrub growth within 1-2 years. Controlling large trees adjacent to crop fields may also enhance crop yield due to a decrease in competition for resources.



BEFORE - NO COVER AT GROUND LEVEL



AFTER - INSTANT ESCAPE COVER

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Create 0.1 to 1.0 acre of dense woody cover per 5-40 acres of wildlife friendly habitat. The minimum size of an area to renovate is 30'x50'. It takes three, 30'x50' areas to equal 0.1 acre. Ideally, 10-20% of wildlife friendly habitat should consist of woody cover.
- Treat existing grass, especially sod-forming grasses such as tall fescue and smooth brome, with an approved contact herbicide before cutting trees. This provides good growing conditions for annual food plants and shrubs. Studies have shown that quail will avoid good dense woody cover if there is an understory of sod forming grass. Refer to JS-BIOL-30, Controlling Undesirable Vegetation Job Sheet, for details.
- Use only chainsaws or tree shearers – no bulldozers. Leave trees where they fall or “windrow” them along the fence or woody draw. Do not push the trees into a dense pile. Refer to IS-MO666cut - Controlling Undesirable Trees and Shrubs Information Sheet, and JS-Biol-18, Edge Feathering, for some recommended control methods and treatments.

- Treat stumps of undesirable trees with an appropriate herbicide to prevent re-sprouting. Do not treat hedge tree stumps when renovating an old hedgerow.
- Do small sections at a time. Cut 50' long sections spaced out every 150 feet. Continue this process each year until the entire fenceline or woody draw has been treated.
- Cut **all** trees over 15 feet tall in the defined area. Leave native shrubs like dogwood or plum and an occasional hard or soft mast producing species like oak, walnut or persimmon.

MAINTENANCE:

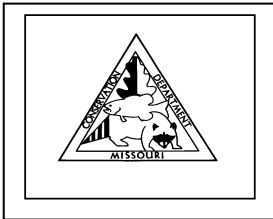
- Exclude livestock from treated areas.
- Use herbicides to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.
- Expect renovated woody draws/fencelines to last 5 to 10 years. Enhance these areas by periodically re-cutting woody sprouts or cut new areas along the woody draw/fenceline.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide natural cover and food sources for quail and other wildlife.

Consult with NRCS, MDC, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

Comment:



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